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STATE FOR DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - CONNIE HUNTER  
ROME FOR TSA

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [EAIR](#) [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [AO](#)  
SUBJECT: STRUGGLING FOR AVIATION SAFETY - ANGOLAN CIVIL AIR  
DIRECTOR MEETS USTDA

REF: A. STATE 110696  
[1](#)B. LUANDA 693

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary. USTDA Country Manager for West and Central Africa Pierce Davis met with Angolan Civil Aviation Agency Director Antonio Pombal on 27 July 2007. Davis found a Pombal preoccupied with INAVIC,s efforts to overcome a European Union ban on TAAG flights. Pombal hopes for immediate DOT support through the Safe Skies program and continuing support to TAAG from the Boeing Corporation. He also described INAVIC,s work with private contractors. Pombal wants both English-language training along with equipment and safety training from DOT for INAVIC,s new airworthiness inspectors. Pombal, who also wants Angola to reach Category One status and initiate direct flights to the United States, listened carefully as Davis described areas where USTDA can fund studies serving Angolan civil aviation,s long-term development. End summary.

Background  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) USTDA,s Country Director for West and Central Africa, Pierce Davis, called on the Antonio Pombal, Director of Angola,s Institute of Civil Aviation (INAVIC) while INAVIC was in a crisis. On 4 July 2007 the European Union banned TAAG, the Angolan national airline, from EU airspace. After the ban went into effect, TAAG first tried rerouting its European flights to Cabo Verde, but TACV, Cabo Verde Airlines (TACV) did not have enough seats to carry all of TAAG,s EU-bound passengers. Now, TAAG has leased airplanes and crews to continue flying its routes and schedules while the airline works to pass muster at the next EU review in October. Angola,s Civil Aviation Agency, named with TAAG in the EU ban, also wants to achieve concrete results before the next EU review. INAVIC Director Pombal took advantage of the visit by USTDA,s Davis to appeal for USG help and describe INAVIC,s efforts.

Pombal at INAVIC  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) On 27 July 2007, Antonio Pombal, meeting USTDA,s Pierce Davis immediately launched into a review of INAVIC,s concerns and its efforts to exit the EU,s blacklist. Pombal hopes for immediate USG assistance to help Angolan civil aviation meet international standards. He listened attentively to Davis,s explanation that while USTDA cannot provide immediate assistance, it does fund studies that identify ways to develop particular sectors of the economy ) including the transportation sector. Davis suggested several areas where USTDA studies might help Angola define its long-term goals for civil aviation. Possibilities included

exploring the scope of Angola,s civil aviation needs, defining which services could enhance security at all airports, or the specific needs of Luanda,s new international airport. (Note: Pombal had just explained that a Chinese company would build the airstrip at an undetermined date, but that the terminal building and all other aspects of the airport have not yet been designed. End note.)

#### INAVIC Tackles Air Safety for Angola

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14. (SBU) Pombal claimed that by the end of August Angola will have in place a new civil aviation law and its implementing regulations ) meeting part of the EU,s requirements. INAVIC will continue working to meet EU standards throughout August and September. INAVIC has also contracted for technical assistance with aviation safety from SH and E (Simat, Helliesen and Eichner, Inc., a U.S. corporation) to upgrade INAVIC,s abilities in air navigability inspections. Topping stacks of books on Pombal,s desk lay two June 2007 studies, one by the European Union Air Safety Committee, &INAVIC ) Implementing the Highest Standards,8 the other a &Plan of Action for TAAG8 in French by the Groupe Aero Conseil Group. (Note: Aero Conseil, according to its website, specializes in supplying airlines with employees in areas where they have a temporary shortage. End note.)

#### Four Major INAVIC Concerns

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15. (SBU) Pombal grouped INAVIC,s current civil aviation safety concerns under four headings: 1) Safe Skies for

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Africa; 2) The new TAAG fleet; 3) Airworthiness inspections; and 4) licensing for Angola,s civil aviation sector.

16. (SBU) Safe Skies for Africa. INAVIC would like to define training programs and time tables with the U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT). Pombal has recently hired 22 new inspectors and hopes DOT can help train them and 10 additional INAVIC inspectors to be hired soon. Pombal confirmed that the revised 2007 GRA budget funds both the new and the additional inspectors. Pombal hopes that DOT can also provide training on equipment and security, and said Angola would like to know what the training would include and its cost.

17. (SBU) New TAAG Fleet. Referring to a 17 April 2006 letter from Boeing describing 13 training programs for TAAG, Pombal noted that some of the programs cited had not yet started. However, he readily conceded that some of Boeing,s programs cannot start before current programs achieve their goals and agreed that those programs are moving slowly. Programs in progress include developing a new IT program for TAAG and a review of TAAG,s flight operations. Programs that have not yet started include building a regional Boeing maintenance center and helping TAAG create a new image and corporate identity.

18. (SBU) Airworthiness Inspections. A Miami company is training seven of INAVIC,s new air worthiness inspectors. Pombal planned to travel to Miami to propose expanding training to include illegal air traffic and interference with traffic.

19. (SBU) Licensing for Angola,s civil aviation sector. INAVIC has contracted several international companies, including the American SH and E, to assist in this area.

#### Conveying Pombal,s Concern to DOT

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¶10. (SBU) Davis congratulated INAVIC and TAAG for securing program support on airworthiness from both DOT and Boeing. Davis also offered to contact both Boeing and DOT upon his return to the United States. Davis suggested that USTDA could explore funding a study of the aviation security sector for Angola. Davis added that USTDA might also fund a study to identify what Luanda,s future international airport will need.

Comment

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¶11. (SBU) USTDA Davis,s visit to INAVIC found the agency straining to find ways to overcome the EU ban on TAAG flights by October. Although Pombal echoed some of the standard complaints by the GRA and TAAG that the ban was not justified, he seemed more concerned with making the best use of the time to improve INAVIC and TAAG,s operations. Pombal also made clear INAVIC,s desire to work with the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Safe Skies Program to raise Angolan civil aviation to Category One status. A revised 2007 budget with funds for additional inspectors suggests high-level GRA support for an continuing aviation safety program meeting international standards. Although most of Pombal,s concerns are short-term, he did listen attentively to Davis,s description of how USTDA can provide long-term help. End Comment.

¶12. This message has been cleared by Pierce Davis, Country Director for West and Central Africa  
FERNANDEZ